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2013

# 2013 Town of Portage Lake Annual Town Meeting Minutes

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Town of Portage Lake  
Annual Town Meeting Minutes  
Friday, April 5, 2013 at 7 p.m.  
Portage Lake Municipal Building

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AROOSTOOK, §

STATE OF MAINE

TO: Rena Belanger, resident of the Town of Portage Lake, County of Aroostook, State of Maine

GREETINGS: In the name of the State of Maine, you are hereby required to notify and warn the Voters of the Town of Portage Lake, in said County, qualified by law to vote in the town affairs, to meet at the Municipal Building in said town on Thursday the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) of April, 2013, at two o'clock (2:00) in the afternoon until seven o'clock (7:00) in the evening, then and there to act upon the Articles 1 and 2 to wit:

ART. 1 To Elect a Moderator to preside at said meeting  
Lou Sandy Boutot is elected moderator of this portion of the Town Meeting

ART. 2 To elect by secret ballot the following Town Officer:  
ONE (1) Selectperson for a term of three (3) years  
Daniel Higgins 101 votes  
John Gagnon 36 votes  
Judy Moreau 2 votes

Daniel Higgins will be sworn in as the newest Selectboard member after tonight's meeting.

And to notify and warn said voters to assemble at the Portage Lake Municipal Building on Friday the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) of April, 2013, at seven o'clock (7:00) in the evening, then and there, to act on the following articles to wit:  
Lou Sandy Boutot is not present for this portion of the meeting. Susan Rogers has two nominations to be Moderator. Susan Rogers is elected moderator for the meeting. She is sworn in by Town Clerk Katherine Gagnon.

There were resident voters and two resident non-voters present.

Judy Moreau reads a statement from Danny Higgins:

"My Fellow Citizens: I would like to thank you all for being here tonight. This is the first town meeting I have missed in about 40 years. Remember—Government is by the people, for the people. All the people up front work for you. The federal government is broke, the state is broke. There is two things you can only get here tonight: Higher taxes or less spending. You can't have both. So when an Article comes up do not be afraid to say your piece. It is not what your neighbor will say but it is how you feel. May God bless you all and thank you. Dan"

ART. 3 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to appoint all necessary officers not elected by ballot for the ensuing year.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 4 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to spend an amount not to exceed 3/12 of the budgeted amount in each budget category of the Town of Portage Lake's annual budget during the period from January 1, 2014 to the annual March Town Meeting.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 5 To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to accept gifts, donations, and grants on behalf of the Town, should such items become available.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 6 To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to file applications for the 2013-2014 State of Maine Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs; and if said applications are approved, to authorize the municipal officers to accept said grant funds, and exercise such authority as needed to implement such programs.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 7 To see if the Town will vote to allow a 2% discount on taxes paid within 30 days of the mailing date and set an interest rate of 7% on taxes unpaid 60 days after the date of tax commitment.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Gary Hafford: I don't understand the way this is. I'll address it to the Board. It's 2% discount if you pay on time. If you don't pay on time it is 7%, but it is compounded. It's not 7% of the total amount for the year. It's a 7% and it continues compounding.

Barb Pitcairn: That would be simple interest. Compound interest is a little more complicated. Simple interest is not. So what they do is they take the amount that you owe after the 60 days, and they'll multiply that times .007, or .07, and that is the amount that you would owe. It is simple interest per month.

Gary Hafford: Per month?

Barb Pitcairn: Per month. Kathy would that be daily? That's not daily.

Kathy Gagnon: It is daily.

Barb Pitcairn: It is daily? OK. I'm corrected.

Sue Rogers: 7%, that is a fee that is set by the state, that isn't a town decision.

Barb Pitcairn: The 7% is set by the state.

Sue Rogers: Correct. That's what I'm saying.

Gary Hafford: But the Town doesn't have to have it compounded, do you know what I'm talking about? That is daily. That runs into quite a bit of money for a person who has a hard time paying their taxes.

David Pierce: That is 7% in a year.

Barb Pitcairn: That is 7% in a year, but if you take 7% and divide it by 365 days, you are .00003.

Gary Hafford: You just said it was 7% in a month; it's on a monthly basis. So it would be 7% of what you owe in a month.

David Pierce: It's 7% for a year; it's a percentage of that daily.

Gary Hafford: Ok. A percentage of that 7% daily.

David Pierce: Right. It is 7% in a year. That's what it means.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 8 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Tax Collector or Treasurer to accept prepayments of taxes not yet committed pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A. Sec. 506.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 9 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectpersons to bring writs of entry for recovery of such parcels of land as have been acquired by the Town by reason of non-payment of taxes, the time of redemption having expired.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 10 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to sell and/or dispose of any property acquired by tax lien after first offering the property to the previous owners for payment of all back taxes, fees and interest, and if they decline, advertising for sealed bids on same, and stating the lowest bid acceptable, and to allow the Selectboard to authorize the Treasurer to waive automatic lien foreclosures when it is in the best interest of the town.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 11 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard and Treasurer, on behalf of the Town, to publish the proposed sale of any Town acquired property and Town owned personal property over \$500, under such terms and conditions as they deem advisable.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 12 To see what money, if any, the Town will vote to authorize the Selectpersons to appropriate from surplus, as they deem advisable, to meet emergencies that occur during the calendar year.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Dave Farnum: I don't know if I can do this in 3 minutes. I would recommend to vote this article down, and I have at least two reasons why. One is in past town meetings that I attended, I have been told that this was for in case we have a forest fire, and that's been hashed over the years, but the Silviculture account is there to not only provide for expenditures required for pre-commercial thinning and planting of the trees, but it is there to provide for forest fire commitment to the State if we had one. The Town is liable for a certain percentage of our Town valuation and because the Town valuation went up over the years, rapidly, then the Forest Committee decided that they needed a Silviculture account; split the money half and half that we get from the forest lands. And that has been brought up at town meetings, and for whatever reason we continue to vote in the \$75,000. One year it was \$25,000.

Anyway, I don't know what other reasons they use this for to expend monies. I asked last year and they said that nobody on the Selectboard knew of any reason they had used to spend these monies. The other reason I recommend to vote it down is to the best of my knowledge we don't have \$75,000 in the surplus account, and if you don't I don't know how you can authorize the Selectboard to spend up to that amount when you don't have it there. I could explain if anyone wants to know why I don't think we have it there, even though the book says we have like \$386,000. We don't have \$75,000 in surplus. So I don't know how you can vote the article.

Linda Caron: My concern was also to address the Selectboard for examples of what would be emergencies. You have spoken of one, but I wonder if other Selectboard members could help out here.

Dave Pierce: The only emergency I could think of off-hand that I was going to respond to is the forest fire thing. I got this figure from the Forest Service last summer: it costs an average of \$10,000 per acre of a wild land fire by the time they suppress it. So it doesn't take long to use up a lot of money. So if we don't have something in there then we're going to have a heck of a big bill with not too many acres burned. So off hand, that's my response to that. I can't think of any other great emergencies right now, unless there was some catastrophe to the building or a train wreck or something like that.

Hollie Umphrey: Just to clarify a little bit on this, \$75,000 seems like a lot, and it is, and you can choose to vote whichever way you want. However, how that usually goes when there is a disaster; we always think of the forest fires because that is what we are surrounded by. However when you have an emergency like, if you had tornadoes in the summer that came through and your roads were blocked off, or if we had an ice jam that damaged, not homes but your infrastructure; if it blocks the Fire Department from getting there, if it blocks the emergency for the Ambulance or the School Department, the National FEMA or any other of your national funding programs do come in and assist your community. It is based on 75% cost-share rate, meaning the Town has to show that they can produce 25% of a cost. And \$75,000 is nothing today. I'm not voting in favor or against, I'm just trying to give clarification on this.

Anita Theriault: If there is a fuel truck going through town, a tanker and it upsets, to protect the citizens of Portage we have to use our resources, our Fire Department and all that, so that would be kind of an emergency or a disaster. We probably would be reimbursed but for the time being it would have to be from somewhere.

Barb Pitcairn: It would have to come from somewhere.

Dave Pierce: Or a train derailment, there are various things like that.

Brian Cote: The way the article reads, "to raise and appropriate out of surplus".

Sue Rogers: It says to appropriate.

Brian Cote: We don't have \$75,000 in surplus, I would have to disagree with it. Again it is just to appropriate \$75,000.

Judy Moreau: Well, every year I say the same thing. There is no emergency that will wait a few days until you get your hands on the money. Look at the State of Maine and the Mainecare hospital bills. I mean they waited how long? And everybody is patient, and everybody is waiting. So I think we don't need to appropriate \$75,000 for any emergency tonight. Let us wait until the emergency strikes and then...Because if it is an oil tanker or a train derailment, that is going to be up to the company or the DEP or some such agency to come to our aid also. Free.

Brian Cote: I'd like to bring this to a vote.

Dave Farnum: Well I didn't explain why I don't think we have the \$75,000 in surplus, but I'd like to ask the front table what they believe that we actually have in surplus today.

Barb Pitcairn: I'll answer that question. Recently we were presented with an internal audit. We have not accepted that audit yet as a Board, so we are not privy to discuss it in open forum. It will be accepted at our next Selectboard meeting because we have had time to review it. Does that audit indicate that we have money in surplus? Yes it does. Does it say that we have \$75,000? Pretty close. That's all I'm going to say.

Roland Caron: How did we go from \$25,000 to \$75,000, first question? And the second question is I don't know how we can vote to move money from surplus if we don't know what you have in surplus. Let's talk about something we are sure of. Do we have \$50,000 in surplus?

Barb Pitcairn: Yup.

Roland Caron: So then why don't we amend the article for \$50,000?

Barb Pitcairn: Once again, it says to appropriate in the upcoming year. In the upcoming year we will have substantial funds in surplus. Second, the amounts \$75,000 and \$25,000; in different years it has fluctuated. A couple of years it went down to \$25,000 because we amended the article. That's how that occurred. As long as I can remember, the Board has petitioned for \$75,000. It is up to the people to either accept that or amend it for either a higher or lower amount.

Hollie Umphrey: Also just to clarify, when I mentioned the 75% and 25%, some of this can be done with in-kind matches for a community; you know, Public Works and Fire Department. I'm looking at it also as a percentage, not in a dollar figure.

Roland Caron: I've always looked at this like this is an emergency and you need it right now. You have no time to think about it, no time to call the Selectmen together, no time to get the taxpayers together. That's what that money is for. So I'm a bit concerned that...I haven't heard yet why we went from \$25,000 to \$75,000.

Sue Rogers: I believe Mr. Caron what they said was that year that it was \$25,000 was because the Town voted to only appropriate from surplus the \$25,000. I believe it was recommended for \$75,000.

Roland Caron: When you put this into the budget, you must have had a reason why you chose \$75,000 over \$50,000 over \$25,000. What is that reason? Is it the forest fire situation?

Barb Pitcairn: It is for any emergency situation that could occur. It could be an overturned tanker, it could be a derailment, it could be a forest fire.

David Pierce: It has been that way for a long time, the way I understand it. And it says appropriate the money, it doesn't say spend it. It is just so if something happens and we don't have time for a special town meeting we have the ability to spend some money that has been appropriated. It doesn't mean it is going to be spent, but if you have to do it really quickly you can't just take it out of someplace.

Roland Caron: I think you need an account like that; I'm just not sure how you came up on the amount of \$75,000. I was just thinking if you could explain that it might ease the tension.

Brian Cote: I think I can explain what Roland is talking about. Real quickly here, three or four years ago we just had a real hard problem with the school budget. We were out of money and couldn't pay the school budget. So we were amending all of the articles to appropriate less money.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 13 To see if the Town will vote to deposit all monies received from the Maine Department of Transportation, Urban/Rural Initiative Program into the Public Works Road Reserve Account for 2013 year.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 14 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$8,500 for a wheelchair lift to meet Federal standards.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: How did you come up with that number?

Larry Duchette: I have been researching what is available and I have a couple of estimates. That is right in the realm of what we need to spend. We are not going to put a fixed unit in, we are not going to remove a stairwell as I had first suggested. We are going to buy a portable unit that can be rolled, stored in a corner, and when needed it will be pulled up in front of the stage and be used.

Linda Caron: Second question: Has any thought been given to a ramp inside the stage.

Larry Duchette: Yes. That is a 43 inch stage, I need a 43 foot ramp, it is one inch per foot. I have looked at all the options, I don't see that as an option at all.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 15 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,500 for a new entrance for the Town Office.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: Why?

Larry Duchette: We would like to have a direct entrance right into the main office from outside.

It would be in the corner right near the other door so people can come directly in instead of coming in this way. It is a second option, and it is a second exit for that office as well.

Linda Caron: So what are you going to do about handicapped people?

Larry Duchette: The handicap has been addressed; they will use this entrance.

Barb Pitcairn: With a wheelchair lift.

Linda Caron: Right, but not everybody is in wheelchairs.

Roland Caron: Have you given any thought of putting the ramp outdoors?

Larry Duchette: There isn't room. I've measured every part of this building, and I have had the fire Marshall here as well and he agrees. This is our only option.

Brian Cote: I don't understand why you want the door to face the lake in the middle of the winter; you open it up and it will cool you off. It doesn't make any sense. It seems like you would want to go inside or something.

Gary Hafford: What is actually wrong with the entrance now?

Larry Duchette: Nothing. It is just a suggestion for easier access.

Gary Hafford: At the time the taxes are going up, you know, I really don't think that it is necessary to put in a new entrance. I know one of the reasons the Town Office was moved upstairs was because that other room was cold. And it was.

Larry Duchette: Cold didn't have much to do with it. It was just disorganized and you couldn't run a business properly out of that space. And this is nothing but a small business.

Gary Hafford: I don't see cutting a hole in the wall and putting another door in when we've got one right here. Wheelchairs are going to use it. I don't mind using it.

Linda Caron: Has there been a problem or complaints?

Barb Pitcairn: No. It is just a suggestion.

Larry Duchette: And like I said, it is a second exit out of that office.

Roland Caron: Had you given any thought to that before you decided to move the office up there and not on the main floor here?

Larry Duchette: No, because I didn't think it was an option at all to use up this space. We are trying to turn this into an emergency center, and I'm working on getting a generator so we can be considered an emergency center through a USDA grant. And this place would be used for bedding.

Roland Caron: How about the office behind you?

Larry Duchette: That office is your voting area and your library now.

Sue Rogers: Excuse me, we need to get back on topic.

Roland Caron: I am on topic, I'm talking about the ....

Sue Rogers: I understand, but we are just talking about the \$5000 for that entrance right now.

Roland Caron: And that's what we are talking about.

Sue Rogers: But you are asking about different rooms.

Roland Caron: The need for the entrance now is because the office was moved up there. Who made the decision to move the office up there, and did they give the forethought to think that by moving the office up there we would need a new ramp and a new entryway, and now it is going to cost the tax payers? Usually you vote on this stuff before you take those actions. You vote to authorize the movement because you know it is going to cost funds in the succeeding year. Who made that decision and why?

Barb Pitcairn: We did make the decision to move the office up here. We needed more space, and that was made over a year ago and actually came into fruition this fall.

Linda Caron: Was that at a public meeting?

Barb Pitcairn: No, the Board made the decision to move the office from there because we were in dire need of more space. More filing space, more counter space. We just needed more space, yes. We have a Treasurer that is working a few days a week as well.

Dave Pierce: It is a more secure space.

Barb Pitcairn: And it is more secure as well. The option for the door truly is convenience and an additional emergency exit.

Gary Hafford: I understand that now we need to put in a wheelchair lift that's gonna to cost us money, then we are going to turn around and put in a door and another entrance way that is going to cost us plenty money. These appropriations, these are estimates. I mean, to put that door in for \$5,500, those are just estimates. It might end up costing us \$10,000 by the time they are done. I just don't see a need for it.

Anita Theriault: Well, that is why it is brought before the people. You are either for it or against it.

Alyce Bryant-Reece: My thought is if you do have an extra door, you will cut down on the wear and tear you are going to have on the floors in here with the traffic coming in and out.

And in the long run, that is going to cost you more money. Not a good idea.

Dave Pierce: And if \$5,500 is appropriated, \$10,000 won't be spent because \$5,500 would be appropriated. You don't have... you spend up to what you have appropriated, so it wouldn't be double that if it was accepted.

**Motion defeated.**

ART. 16 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$30,000 for a 1-ton plow truck with dump and sander. This will replace the '89 plow truck and the ½ ton pick-up.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: I would like to make an amendment...

Sue Rogers: If you would like to make an amendment, I need you to write it down for recording reasons. Then I will read your amendment and you will have to have a second to that amendment.

Judy Moreau: OK. I've got it all written down here. I would like this Article 16 to be amended to read: "To take from Public Works \$30,000 plus the sale of the '89 truck and the ½ ton truck".

**Amendment is seconded.**

Discussion on Amendment:

Judy Moreau: The reason being for the amendment is there is \$48,000 in Public Works reserve. So rather than raise it, I think we could use the savings this year where things are a little bit tight.

Gary Hafford: I would like to ask what does the Town need a new plow truck for.

Sue Rogers: We are in discussion on the amendment of where to take the money from.

Clayton DeMerchant: Why do we want to take it from there? We don't have any money anyway, so why do we want to take it from here and put it to there? We don't have any money. This little town is hurting. We need to get back on our feet. Why should we take money from somewhere else and give it to something else? We don't need that. We have two trucks out here that we can use if they would get off their tails and use them, but they won't.

Linda Caron: I agree with Judy because Article 20, and it doesn't say when, Public Works Reserve on page 44, that another \$40,000 had been put in there. And that is what you were referring to, the \$48,000? So money has been put aside and it does exist for that purpose.

Sue Rogers: Any other discussion regarding the amendment that Judy is making? We are going to take a vote to make that amendment, then I will entertain a motion to then discuss the article as amended, then we will vote on that. So this next vote is just to accept Judy's amendment to the article.

Judy Moreau: Article 16 will be amended to read "To see if the Town will vote to take from Public Works \$30,000 plus the sale of the 1989 truck and the ½ ton truck to purchase the 1-ton truck with a plow, dump and sander."

Corrine Routhier: Judy, the way you are reading it, it sounds like you are taking it out of the budget for Public Works. Can you say the full name of the reserve account?

Judy Moreau: Public Works Reserve.

Corrine Routhier: Equipment.

Judy Moreau: Public Works Equipment Reserve. I'm going to get another gray hair just trying to get this amended.

**Motion to approve amendment to Article 16 carries.**

Sue Rogers: We will now vote on amended Article 16 that reads "To see if the Town will vote to take from Public Works Equipment Reserve \$30,000, plus the sale of the 1989 truck and ½ ton truck, to purchase a 1 ton plow truck with a plow and sander, and the whole nine yards".

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Marcelle Gagnon: The plow truck, it costs \$30,000, right?

Larry Duchette: I've been researching it from here to Massachusetts and back. Anywhere from \$25,000 to \$40,000 depending on what we can get for a used vehicle with low mileage. I'm looking at trucks that are used in the Massachusetts area especially; pretty much mulch is all that they haul and they are well maintained.

Marcelle Gagnon: So if we sell the '89 plow truck and the ½ ton pick-up, those monies will go toward this truck. It is has to be more than \$30,000.

Larry Duchette: It is unknown; I'm still shopping. I will keep it within budget, I guarantee that.

Brian Cote: What is wrong with the '89 truck with the plow and the sander in the back?

Larry Duchette: The '89 is in disrepair. The two speed is gone. We are wasting fuel and cutting edges, plowing two inches of snow with a truck that size. And I have to hire a class 2 driver every winter, of which I put out three different postings and the response I got were from people who had just gotten their class 2, had no mechanical ability, and I was unable to fill that position. So as a test I took my half ton pick-up and I plowed all of these roads myself in these small storms. And I was able to keep them open and keep Vaughn's over time down so I've already saved us \$1000 in labor. I will be able to hire anyone in this room to drive this truck and plow these roads.

Ken Fones: How much do you think you could get for selling the old equipment?

Larry Duchette: On a good day, maybe \$8,000. We are not going to get rich on it, but we are going to be taking two pieces out of the fleet and replacing it with one that will be utilized year round, and will also be able to haul the trailer. As it stands right now, that trailer is parked and won't be moved until I can get a truck that can tow it. We don't have electric brakes on our ½ ton, and it is in need of anywhere from \$600 to \$1000 worth of repairs to get a sticker. I hate dumping money into old iron.

Wilza Robertson: Will this plow truck that you are looking to purchase have a plow on it?



Larry Duchette: It has everything.

Judy Moreau: Will the insurance go down?

Larry Duchette: Yes it will.

Richard Casey: What happened to the old plow truck after Rudy and I got it ready for inspection, and got it inspected and never used it? How did all of a sudden it get worn out?

Larry Duchette: It is under-utilized and it is sitting there and plowing two inches of snow with a truck that size is not beneficial, when you can do it with a little 1-ton, and you can keep the roads open until Vaughn comes in on straight time, and you aren't paying the extra money and aren't sucking up as much fuel, and tires, and everything that goes along with it.

Dave Pierce: Plus you can use that vehicle in the summer time take care of brush and the small jobs instead of wasting money.

Brian Cote: Larry, is it diesel or gas?

Larry Duchette: Diesel.

Barbara Beaulier: I thought we were going to sell them?

Larry Duchette: Yes, we are.

Roland Caron: Any consideration of putting these things out to bid to see if we can get?

Larry Duchette: Yes we are going out to bid.

Roland Caron: I think we could get all the dealers up here instead of going to Massachusetts.

Larry Duchette: I contacted dealers up here and no one has called me back. That was months ago.

Clayton DeMerchant: My opinion, I think we ought to wait. We don't need that right now. Let's get this little town back on track and then you can think about a truck. Right now we don't have any money. If we had any money it would be different. I think we ought to take a good look and think about it. Down the road if you got money, do it. Hey, you guys can't reduce our taxes or anything, but you can buy stuff. Why can you buy stuff if you can't reduce our taxes?

Dave Pierce: We have two trucks that aren't in service or can't be used, and one isn't legal to haul a trailer and it is too small to begin with. That's why.

Clayton DeMerchant: I have to disagree with you there. I have an F-150 myself, and I pull a trailer and I plow a tractor with mine. I see the truck has got an inspection sticker on it.

Gary Hafford: I don't mind the money part of it for a pick-up truck, but I'll tell you my own personal experience out here is that the pick-up truck he's got now has not been maintained by him. When he can roll into Ashland and have the wheel fall off of it. Is this going to happen to this new truck?

Larry Duchette: I can't respond to that; I have no idea you are talking about.

Gary Hafford: Christy knows what I'm talking about because it happened when I was on the Board. That pick-up truck out here does not get maintained by Vaughn. And they took it to Ashland one day and the tire fell off the damn thing. So when that happens....What is he going to do with a new truck? That's my concern.

Larry Duchette: I find Vaughn takes very good care of the equipment.

Gary Hafford: No. I disagree with you.

Judy Moreau: If we stick to the amendment, the truck won't cost us that much because we already have saved that much and more. So that solves that problem. If you want to keep nickel and diming the Town, fine. We can do that.

Roland Caron: I move to vote.

**Article 16 carries as amended.**

**ART. 17** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$35,000 for the General Administration operating account, and to allow any reimbursements to be used for the same.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

**Discussion:**

Linda Caron: Is it possible, and I address the Board, that the Maine Acadian Heritage Council...Last year there was \$100. There is going to be a greater need that is coming this fiscal year for that line item. I don't know how that

works. That's dues. I don't know if that is something that I could suggest to you. We do have three family names currently having reunions, and we are talking thousands and thousands of people and Portage would be a recipient of some of that income as people come through.

Barb Pitcairn: Linda, I think you have taken over that spot for Ray, and we thank you for that. I think what needs to be done is the Town needs to have a little planning committee because we can't just appropriate money and not have a plan in place. We do know there are some things that are going to be needed; we may need to do a few extra things around town. I do think that if we are going to start looking forward to August of 2014, we need to put a Committee together just like we did for our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It's not going to be as expensive, but we do need to have a plan in place before the Town can feel comfortable before appropriating or raising any funds. But I do agree with you.

Linda Caron: Will it be too late a year from now? We know that this coming August we will be having....

Sue Rogers: This has nothing to do with General Administration funds though...

Barb Pitcairn: Yes, it's in there.

Sue Rogers: It's part of that?

Missy Boutot: That was the amount that was expended last year, right?

Roland Caron: So what do you plan to spend the \$35,000 for this year?

Larry Duchette: General government.

Roland Caron: Do we have any wiggle room?

Linda Caron: Very little. About \$3000.

Roland Caron: Now is the time, if we need to have more money raised we need to amend the article.

Sue Rogers: You can't amend to raise.

Roland Caron: Oh, that's right too.

Sue Rogers: This was basically a miscellaneous item that was asked for throughout the year, it wasn't an ongoing... That's where it was taken out of because it wasn't appropriated.

Linda Caron: I'm thinking it was when Lorraine Pelletier came and talked to the Community we had a meal and she talked about the expenditure that was occurred.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 18 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$76,000 for Town Officers, Town Manager, Town Clerk, and Town Treasurer.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 19 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$6,400 for the following: \$2,700 for the purpose of assessing Personal Property, \$3,500 for the purpose of assessing Real Property, and \$200 for Registry fees of deeds and transfers.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 20 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate monies towards town revaluation not to exceed \$38,500 for 2013. This completes our payment of our contract with Tarr Assessing Services.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Dave Farnum: Last year we raised and appropriated \$16,500 and I think at the time we were told that it was half of it. At what point did it not become half of it?

Larry Duchette: The contract wasn't signed until May, when the actual number was agreed upon.

Dave Farnum: So the contract wasn't signed until May for much more, unbeknownst to the taxpayers. Is there a particular reason why it went up so much?

Barb Pitcairn: We knew the revaluation was in order, and we didn't have a contracted offer from Tarr Assessing Services. We knew we needed to raise some money, so we raised some money. We based it on an estimate. Then

when we received the fact that we had 720 parcels, so on and so forth, he based his assessment in terms of how many. There was no underlying meaning to this. It wasn't done in deceit, or...you know. We knew we had to raise some money, and we did.

Dave Farnum: You are asking the Town to pay a bill that was more than what the Town was told that it would be. And you authorized payment of that without being authorized to do that.

The Selectboard wasn't authorized to sign a contract for \$58,500, or whatever it is to have the Town reassessed. It's \$38,500 plus \$16,500 from last year.

Larry Duchette: That \$16500 was also a part of the yearly assessing.

Dave Farnum: I don't think so. That was solely for... We were told that it was for half of the assessing and the other half would be this year. The Selectpeople signed a contract for a lot more money without being authorized. They signed a contract to spend money. I didn't know the Selectpeople could do that.

Barb Pitcairn: We based the \$16,500 on an estimate.

Dave Farnum: Right, but why didn't you come back before the Town to say can we spend extra money for assessing because we need to. You are asking the Town to vote to approve something that you've already entered into a contract without having permission from the Town to do so. It's like if you went to buy a truck and signed an agreement to buy a truck for \$100,000 then you come to the Town and ask us to approve paying the \$100,000. That's not the way it works. You asked for \$30,000 for a 1-ton truck, but that sale hasn't gone through yet. That's the way you do that; you ask for the money ahead of time and you ask for the authority to do that. You've already spent this money and you are asking now to approve what you as a Board signed a contract to spend money of the Town without authority.

Corrine Routhier: Dave? We haven't spent this money yet. We spent the \$16,500 from last year.

Dave Farnum: Right. But you have a legal obligation to pay that bill because you signed a contract with him.

Barb Pitcairn: Ok. Your point is and you would like us to do what?

Dave Farnum: My point is the Town was misinformed last year when we were told it was going to be \$33,000 and you approved half. You had that based on something, more than just "well, we have to approve something" because we were paying for half. My other point is you entered into a contract and made the Town liable for paying far more than we were led to believe. And I don't know where you got the authority to sign a contract to spend money that you are now asking us to spend.

David Pierce: I understood it the same as you did, Dave. I thought it was half of it at the time.

Kathy Gagnon: I just looked up the minutes from last year, and they never said that it was half the payment; they only said it was a partial.

Rob Reece: So can you just tell us now how much more we owe above the \$16000 that we said we had for last year.

Barb Pitcairn: \$38,000. That's what we owe.

Judy Moreau: What was the entire contract signed for? What was the bottom line?

Larry Duchette: I'd have to go look it up, I don't have it right off the top of my head. I took that number and deducted what we already paid, and came up with that total.

Steve Jandreau: Does the assessing go up for bid at all?

Barb Pitcairn: They don't have any competition.

David Pierce: We looked into that. We weren't happy, but we kind of had our hands tied.

Steve Jandreau: So just Scott for appraisals and Tarr for assessing and that's it?

Barb Pitcairn: Well, appraisals...we are limited on those too.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 21 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$26,000 for Municipal Building operating expenses and to allow the rental fees to be used for the same.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 22 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,000 for the Planning & Appeals Boards.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Brian Cote: The Appeals Board doesn't really get any money for going to the meetings, the Planning Board I think does. So this is \$1000 for pencils and paper?

Barb Pitcairn: No training, actually. We encourage training for all of the Planning and Appeals Board members, and there is training available. So that money is there for that purpose.

Dave Pierce: And the Planning Board members do not get paid.

Judy Moreau: Isn't the Board of Appeals Secretary paid?

Dave Pierce: Yes. \$400 a year.

Barb Pitcairn: For both.

Judy Moreau: She's the same secretary for the Board of Appeals and the Planning Board?

Barb Pitcairn: Yes.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 23 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$13,000 for Code Enforcement activities, in addition to the plumbing, building permit fees, and fines received in the calendar year.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 24 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$4,500 for abatements.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: Due to this new revaluation, will there more abatements this year than usual? Do you know?

Barb Pitcairn: I don't see why there will be any abatement?

Judy Moreau: Well, some properties will go down in value.

Barb Pitcairn: But those are for the calendar year, so you aren't going to go back to previous years to abate. Am I correct?

Kathy Gagnon: Everyone in the town will be able to meet with Randy Tarr to discuss their assessment. They will be receiving a letter and will be calling here to make appointments to see him sometime this spring. And that will be the time to discuss it.

Roland Caron: Is Randy Tarr going to be charging additional fees to do this, or is it included?

Barb Pitcairn: It's all included.

Roland Caron: So everybody should meet with him.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 25 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$15,000 for discounts on taxes paid within thirty (30) days of the mailing date.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Brian Cote: This is pretty tricky how this has been done, here. If you go back to Article 7, that is to allow you to have your 2% discount, and my understanding is that several years ago someone figured out that we are losing \$15,000 because of giving the 2%. So now here they write an article to get back that 2%.

Sue Rogers: It has to balance somehow.

Brian Cote: That is an initiative for the taxpayer to pay his taxes early. But with the people paying early, the town is losing \$15,000 with the 2%. That was a figure that got thrown out here a few years ago. So now you write an Article...to take my 2% back.

Barb Pitcairn: It has been like that for 40 years, for as long they have been taking the 2% discount.

Brian Cote: This article has been in here? That was in there last year?

Barb Pitcairn: Yes it has.

Brian Cote: I missed that one.

Dave Farnum: It was in there last year, the only difference is it came out of surplus. But it's still the same concept.  
**Motion carries.**

ART. 26 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$28,500 for the Portage Lake Fire Department operating account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 27 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$3,387 for annual membership dues for: Maine Municipal Association, \$1,388; Northern Maine Development Corporation, \$1,463; Maine Tourism, \$145; World Acadian Congress, \$390.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: Northern Maine Development Corporation. What have they done for us this year?

Barb Pitcairn: I would advise that to not be paid for sure. There is a plethora of information at our finger tips if we need it. The Brownfield Steering Committee, they have people we can talk to about micro-loans, CDBG grants, how to write grants to get funds.

Judy Moreau: Can we get them to help us do some of those grants?

Barb Pitcairn: We have to approach them, that's all.

Larry Duchette: There is something new that Barb and I talked about, and I will be approaching them. I didn't realize that these services were available. It has been under-utilized for a number of years.

Barb Pitcairn: We are going to be going to them for some help with our roads.

Dave Pierce: Some of the hours allotted for the Town from Northern Maine Development Corporation are used when they are trying to get a committee and write a grant in Ashland. I was on the board for that. Some of the money reserved for Ashland, some of the other towns have to kick in a little as a way to try to get a grant through them. It didn't go through, but they are going to try again this year.

Hollie Umphrey: Just to clarify, one thing that we did use NMDC for was we got into a community bidding pool for the salt. The Town didn't buy the salt solely, we got a lower bid.

David Pierce: So those are two things that we used last year.

Judy Moreau: The next question I have is for Maine Tourism. Could we please have Portage put on the map down the road, Knowles Corner, Masardis, or...?

Sue Rogers: There is one at the top of the hill in Ashland.

Rob Reece: The figure for the World Acadian Congress is quite high. Why is that?

Larry Duchette: It is based on head count of the population of the Town.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 28 To see if the Town will vote to carry forward for the General Assistance Program the amount of \$3,960 and to allow any reimbursements to be used for the same.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: Just one little quick question. I understand that the General Assistance has... the amount that you can actually make a month has gone up quite high?

Larry Duchette: Yes. It is very difficult to get General Assistance now, based on emergency situations.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 29 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$63,931 for the following accounts:

Property/Casualty/Liability, \$12,672; Unemployment Insurance, \$4,642; Workers Compensation, \$5,635; FICA/MED (employer), \$11,000; Employees Health Insurance, \$28,531.08; Income Protection Plan, \$2,780.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: The Budget Cmte. recommended "no" for this, and the reason for the Budget Committee's recommendation was the Employees Health Insurance. The Budget Committee felt at the time that the employees should pay a percentage of their health insurance, just so everybody knows why the Budget Committee recommends no. It is up to the legislative body in this town to say what they want to say.

Roland Caron: Just a question on the Income Protection Plan. Who does that cover?

Larry Duchette: Vaughn, Kathy and myself.

Roland Caron: Can you talk to me a little bit about the plan? I've never...

Kathy Gagnon: When I broke my back in 2010, it paid me for the time that I lost after I used all of my sick time. Actually it paid me from the day. I had used all of my sick time and the insurance had paid me from the day that I fell.

Brian Cote: Has anybody, Selectboard or Town Manager, been looking at the option for employees to pay partial?

Larry Duchette: We are looking at bids right now from other companies, liability and health as well.

Dave Pierce: I think your question was if we looked at employees paying a percentage.

Brian Cote: In a way, I guess, but to see if what your premium would be if say the employee paid 25%, or 20%/80%, or....

Dave Pierce: I myself thought the price was good at the time. For the wages that they get compared to everyone else that makes up for that. They make less than everyone else in the County, and it kind of makes it more equal pay with the insurance. I looked into it; I wanted it that way at first until I realized what they were getting paid.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 30 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for the Portage Lake Fire Department Reserve Account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: Can you repeat for me what we voted for prior to, didn't we have another raise? The \$40,000 toward Fire?

Larry Duchette: That was public Works.

Linda Caron: Public Works. OK. Just to clarify that on page 44 in 2011, the Fire Department put another \$10,000 in their Fire Department Equipment Reserve. They may be working toward something.

Larry Duchette: We are keeping enough in reserves to update the trucks when it comes time. Just putting money in the bank to be prepared for a rainy day.

Gary Hafford: What do they have in reserves now?

Barb Pitcairn: \$45,564. According to 2012 accounts.

Brian Cote: A brand new truck costs a quarter of a million dollars. We have \$45,000.

David Pierce: And that's not a fancy one.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 31 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$10,000 for the Public Works Equipment Reserve account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 32 To see if the Town will vote to raise \$615 in addition to the balance carried forward of \$140 for the Animal Control Account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: Why the increase?

Barb Pitcairn: The increase actually came from a state standard.

Larry Duchette: Training and a \$50 increase in his wages for his time.

Barb Pitcairn: And that's a state standard.

Dave Farnum: And actually last year wasn't \$539, it was \$539 plus the \$196 carried forward.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 33 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$78,000 for the Public Works operation account, in addition to any funds reimbursed to said account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 34 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$60,000 for the Road Reserve Account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Roland Caron: How much do we have in the Road Reserve Account currently?

Barb Pitcairn: A little over \$10,000. We had \$147,000 last year and we used almost all of it when we did that one mile of paving.

Larry Duchette: About \$11,000.

Barb Pitcairn: What we are doing with the \$60,000, just to clarify, is our Road Reserve account is very low. We have some serious road work that does need to be done. The town does need to address this in the next couple of years, sooner than later but we need to start building up that account again. We may propose a bond to do all of our roads at one time, instead of one mile at a time; it will be cheaper and more cost effective to do it all at one time. We need some funds in an account to offset as much as possible.

Brian Cote: Do we have an account or a column in the TIF account for our infrastructure?

Larry Duchette: Mr. Farnum can answer that question.

Dave Farnum: No.

Barb Pitcairn: Is there a possibility it could be added?

Dave Farnum: I doubt it. It has to be tied to the hard wood mill in one way or another.

**Motion carries.**

*Comment about TIF:*

*Dave Farnum: I would just like to make a comment on the TIF. Some day we are not going to be able to spend that money on approved projects. When the 20 years is up, it won't be left in TIF and it could be spent. In the meantime, it will go into the different funds. So at that point you can use that money for whatever, and probably will pay off things like a bond for road improvement.*

*Anita Theriault: How much time is left on TIF?*

*Dave Farnum: We were in the 14<sup>th</sup> year last year, so we have half of this year and five more years.*

ART. 35 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$31,608 for Northern Aroostook Solid Waste Association.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Larry Duchette: We are researching alternative plans, but nothing I can discuss at this point.

I think that is a ridiculous number to be paying someone else to handle our trash. We need to find a way to do it.

Maggie has been working on it for some time.

Dave Farnum: Did anyone ever find a contract?

Larry Duchette: Yes I did.

Dave Farnum: We have a contract that we signed.

Larry Duchette: It was signed a few years ago. This is going to take a little time to put together, but I choke every time I look at this number.

Hollie Umphrey: If we withdraw from NASWA, will we still have to pay a loan?

Larry Duchette: We will not.

Hollie Umphrey: I thought they had a loan out for new construction? You don't sign the contract; it is the NASWA Board of Directors. The Town does not have... you don't sign the contract. It is the NASWA Board of Directors.

Larry Duchette: There is a clause in there that says you can, in writing, resign from that.

Hollie Umphrey: When I went last year, they said that you can resign but we are responsible for the debt that was acquired while you were part of that association.

Larry Duchette: Our percentage of it, and it may be worth paying it off to make it go away.

Roland Caron: Maybe it will work paying it off as opposed to paying it to attorneys.

Anita Theriault: The contract runs out when?

Larry Duchette: I would have to go get the contract; I just got it this week.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 36 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$4,250 for the operation of the Transfer Station.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 37 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$13,500 for contracted services for mowing, road side mowing, road sweeping and grader work.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 38 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$525 in addition to the balance carried forward of \$1,040 for the maintenance of the Portage Lake Municipal Cemetery.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: I would like to know when the Town voted to charge X number of dollars for the plots and at how much money for each lot was voted on? I have looked and I can't see. I don't think we have ever voted on it. It is the *Portage Lake Municipal Cemetery*, and we would have to vote on it.

Mary Ann Gagnon: We have researched back, and we couldn't find anything as far back as we had gone.

It was \$150, and last year it was approved when we did our new brochures for the Town that we agreed to go with the same price that Ashland did. We raised it by \$50.

Judy Moreau: So now it is \$200.

Mary Ann Gagnon: And that was done before, when Hollie was Town manager and the Selectboard agreed.

Judy Moreau: I think the Selectboard should have brought that to the vote of the people, I may be wrong. But where it is the Municipal Cemetery to see if the rates were acceptable to the...you know?

Anita Theriault: Sue, when you worked at the Town Office it was the same fee then?

Sue Rogers: It was \$150 I believe, I don't remember it being lower than that.

Roland Caron: When I talked to Barb about it, it was prime real estate and people were just dying to get there. (laughter from general audience)

Gloria Curtis: I guess the point is that we have been paying \$150 for quite a while. I can't remember burying my grandmother and my uncle John without paying that fee. I do know that several people have several plots together for their entire families that never paid a cent. So there is a time somewhere there when it was changed. Who changed it or how it was changed, you should have in your records there somewhere. Because all of a sudden we started charging money. So it has to be there somewhere.

Marcelle Gagnon: I want to know what the maintenance is for the cemetery?

Barb Pitcairn: For the mowing.

Marcelle Gagnon: Isn't mowing already approved?

Barb Pitcairn: It was approved under contracted services.



Mary Ann Gagnon (reading from the account list in the 2012 Town Report): There were supplies, we paid for all of the flags at the cemeteries in town, that was \$137.16, and that tends to go up. Mowing the back field this year cost us \$262.50. And what is not in here is mowing of the regular cemetery, and that hasn't been put in here.

Larry Duchette: That was contracted services.

Mary Ann Gagnon: And this year what we are looking at, the budget is for white posts to put at certain areas of the cemetery in corners where we have flat stones and people tend to drive over them. That's what we are going to with that. Otherwise than that, well it says in the book what we have done and what we have used our budgeted money for. We have six or seven boulders donated by Peter & Christy for the parking lot. So people will be able to park and not run over the stones or damage them.

Judy Moreau: I would like to say "thank you" to Mary Ann for the Mr. Lannigan plaque. It makes my heart feel very good. He donated the land.

Kenny Fones: Has there been any thought to selling the mower we have?

Larry Duchette: We haven't gotten that far yet. The people that are responding to those bids are higher. If I can't get the number I want, we may need to hire it out.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 39** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$800 for Portage Lake Beautification in addition to the balance carried forward of \$1,783.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

**ART. 40** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$11,000 in addition to anticipated income from campground fees, for upkeep and maintenance of the campground, public beach, boat landing, Seaplane Base, pavilion and parks.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Anita Theriault: Are Fern and Richard still going to be in charge of the campground?

Larry Duchette: They have agreed to come back again this year.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 41** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$500 in matching funds as the Town's share of the Portage Lake Association application for an Invasive Cost Share Grant to aid in the identification and education of invasive aquatic plants in, or on, Portage Lake.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Brian Cote: I thought this was a volunteer thing, all of the camp owners, they volunteer a tremendous amount of time standing up there at our landing. Can you just explain to me why we owe \$500?

Melissa Boutot: In order for the Lake Association to qualify for the grant, we have to show a matching piece and it has to come from the Town. The Lake Association also matches it as well, and then we get \$2000.

Anita Theriault: Some of the money goes to training people.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 42** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,500 for the Portage Lake Tourism Committee.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

**ART. 43** To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$1,500 for vital record preservation and to allow all the fees collected from vital record transactions to be used to defray some of the cost of having the old town records preserved.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: Do you know how many more books you've got?

Kathy Gagnon: Not really.

Judy Moreau: How many have you done?

Kathy Gagnon: I really don't know. Maybe six. The last one ended up being a double book.

Larry Duchette: If you ever get a chance and want to see our history, I'm amazing every time she brings one of those books out. You can look back years and see everything that has happened, and she does a great job.

Marcelle Gagnon: Are these preserved on a disk for computers?

Kathy Gagnon: We can, but it is very expensive.

Marcelle Gagnon: So it is just the book itself.

Gloria Curtis: What exactly are you doing to preserve? What is the process?

Kathy Gagnon: We ship them out to Vermont, it used to be Brown River, but now they are named Kofile. They take our books apart, number everything in order, take all the tape off, anything that they can get off that doesn't belong there, and they put it in a book. I can show you after the meeting.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 44** To see if the Town will vote to expend all money received from the State reimbursement for snowmobile registrations to the Portage Lakers Snowmobile Club for the purpose of maintaining and improving trails for use by the public.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: They are going to need all of the money they can get.

Kenny Fones: I'm sorry. (laughter from residents)

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 45** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Municipal Officers to apply for and accept Snowmobile Trail Grant Funds on behalf of the Portage Lakers Snowmobile Club for the purpose of maintaining and improving trails for use by the public.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

**ART. 46** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Portage Lakers Snowmobile Club for the purpose of aiding to maintain local snowmobile trails for public use.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Marcelle Gagnon: Why \$2,500 now? Aren't they getting money back from registrations?

Jen Curran: The \$2,500 has actually been done for quite some time. I think we had increased it by \$500 maybe 8 or 9 years ago. The grant that Sue does submit for the Town, it says that it is a 70% matching grant. Say that the grant was \$20,000; the state would actually give us 70% of that. The Town really does not give 30%. The Snowmobile Club makes up that 30%, but we need to receive monies from the Town in order to qualify for the 70%.

Marcelle Gagnon: Does the Snowmobile Club give back the money? The \$2,500.

Jen Curran: We don't give it back. No, we need...

Marcelle Gagnon: You are already getting money back from registrations.

Sue Rogers: The grant we apply for is about \$35,000 or \$37,000 every year. The State looks at it, gives us some money back. They never grant us the amount we request. We usually collect \$20,000. The Town is supposed to match that difference. So let's say the State said they are only going to do the \$33,000, the State gives us \$20,000, and technically the Town should be giving us \$13,000 according to that agreement. We have never, ever had the Town match that.

Jen Curran: We are only asking the town for \$2,500. And that is why we do all of our fund raising to put that into the pool so the Town of Portage actually qualifies for that grant.

Sue Rogers: Does that make sense?

Marcelle Gagnon: Yes. I don't remember seeing it before. Well, you are getting the money back from registrations, so I just...

Jen Curran: That is completely different.

Kathy Gagnon: Registrations is maybe \$500 if we are lucky.

Anita Theriault: This isn't something new; we have been getting money from the Town for 10 or 15 years.

Marcelle Gagnon: So this is for the grant? It should be written in there like that so people like me would understand.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 47 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Portage Lakers ATV Club to help with costs of maintaining the ATV trail system in Portage Lake.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Marcelle Gagnon: Same thing. Why \$2,500?

Darey Gagnon: It is the same thing as the Snowmobile Club, if we don't get \$2,500 we can't get our grant money.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 48 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$1,500 for the scholarships for Portage Lake students graduating in June of 2013.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Anita Theriault: If the money isn't used, and there are no seniors what happens?

Barb Pitcairn: It goes to surplus.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 49 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$9,000 for street lights.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Marcelle Gagnon: I just wondered, is there any way we can get LED lights?

Larry Duchette: I'm working with Maine Public right now and they are suggested that they are starting that program. But it will be a couple years out. It was my concern about the cost. I actually received a listing of every light in town. If anyone sees a light that is now working, let us know, we will notify them and they will fix it. And I have made recommendations to shut some of them off, and I will continue to try. We have too many.

Mary Ann Gagnon: Where are these new street lights going to go?

Larry Duchette: What new street lights?

Barb Pitcairn: They are not.

Darey Gagnon: Between the churches and the railroad crossing I believe there are 35 street lights.

Larry Duchette: I can give you a list and a map showing where each one is.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 50 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 for legal fee reserve account.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Judy Moreau: Is this a new account? There is nothing in this account yet. There has never been an account set up for legal fees, is what I'm saying.

Larry Duchette: This is going to be a way for us to track it. There is one thing we have noticed in our accounting is that a lot of money has been taken as an expense and there has been no accountability for it over the years. We are working on the audit. I would like a way to be able to track those fees.

Judy Moreau: So this isn't going to be a new account.

Larry Duchette: Corrine?

Barb Pitcairn: It is going to be a new account for the purposes of tracking it.

Judy Moreau: Thank you for answering my question. This is a new account. There is nothing in it other than this.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 51** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$15,771.33 for the Ashland User Fees: Ambulance \$12,626.46; Library, \$1483.92; Recreation, \$1,660.95.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Marcelle Gagnon: Recreation fee. Why are we paying them for Rec?

Dave Pierce: For the Rec. center.

Marcelle Gagnon: Yes, but a lot of people from Ashland come here to use our beach.

Larry Duchette: I'm looking at in the future getting town ordinances about the beach.

That is one of my pet peeves. We spend a lot of money on that beach.

Barb Pitcairn: We have to do something.

Dave Pierce: How do you enforce it? That's the problem.

Melissa Boutot: Why can't we just ask Ashland to pay like they are asking us to pay?

Barb Pitcairn: We have been talking about it. That has been a pet peeve for many years.

Anita Theriault: Why don't we tell them we won't charge you for the beach and the boat landing if you don't charge us for these? We'll swap.

Larry Duchette: Ralph and I have had some discussions recently.

Gary Hafford: If we start charging for the beach, we are more than likely going to have to have a lifeguard there.

Barb Pitcairn: No, I don't think we will have to go that route. What we'd like to do is go to Ashland to ask them for some user fees for the boat landing and the beach.

Larry Duchette: One issue is the monitoring of the beach. One option is the University of Maine Criminal Division has senior students that need on the job training that would work for nothing. We would have to buy them like 7 tee-shirts to be our enforcer at the beach.

Dave Pierce: There are a lot of people who come here from other areas, like Presque Isle. It's not just Ashland.

Larry Duchette: It isn't only the usage that I'm concerned with. It's smoking and the alcohol, the liability issue that we could incur quite easily. And we would own that.

Sue Rogers: You will be having a separate meeting discussion on...OK.

Marcelle Gagnon: I'm just wondering if this amount of \$1,660.95 is what they have requested or is it something...?

Larry Duchette: That is there fee. I put a call in to Ralph. I questioned the library, but we have 52 card holders there.

Marcelle Gagnon: I can see the Library, but the Rec.

Larry Duchette: The Rec. Department is an asset that sees a lot of activity.

**Motion carries.**

**ART. 52** To see if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 6 (1) (B) "Animal Sounds and Dogs Running At Large" of the Portage Lake Land Use Ordinance (See Exhibit B)

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Brian Cote: I would like to make a motion that we block together Articles 52 through 56.

**Motion seconded.**

Sue Rogers: OK. So there a second on the floor to the motion to block Articles 52 through 56? Any discussion on the blocking of these Articles?

Discussion on Motion to block articles: None.

**Motion to block the articles together carries.**

Sue Rogers: Moving on to Article 57...

Corrine Routhier: It's a vote on them all together.

Gloria Curtis: We voted to block them together, but now we have to vote on them as a whole.

Sue Rogers: OK. So I need a motion to block to Articles 52 through 56.

Christy Dicker: We did that. Now we need to vote to approve or not approve that block.

Gloria Curtis: No. Someone's going to make an amendment...

Brian Cote: We didn't do an amendment.

Sue Rogers: So now we are voting on that block.

Brian Cote: Right.

Dave Farnum: Just ask to approve the block motion.

Corrine Routhier: Sue, you already approved his motion to block it, now you have to approve the block itself; all of them together.

Sue Rogers: OK. To block it all together. That's what I thought I was doing.

Dave Pierce: You did. Now we have to vote to approve or not approve, not the blocking, just the articles.

Gary Hafford: We need to approve the Articles in the block.

Gloria Curtis: But we do have to read them, right? All of them?

Dave Pierce: No, they are blocked together, so they need to be voted on to approve...

Dave Farnum: Right, but they just asked if you have to read them, and I think technically you have to read them.

Sue Rogers: So I do have to read each individual one, but we can vote on it in one swoop? OK.

*Sue Rogers reads all Articles 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56 together for a vote on the grouping of these articles:*

*Art. 52: To see if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 6 (1) (B) "Animal Sounds and Dogs Running At Large" of the Portage Lake Land Use Ordinance (See Exhibit B)*

*Art. 53: To see if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 6 (1) (G) (H) "Buffers and Screening" of the Portage Lake Land Use Ordinance. (See Exhibit C)*

*Art. 54: To see if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 8 (1) (B) "Automobile Graveyards, Automobile Recycling and Junkyards" of the Portage Lake Land Use Ordinance. (See Exhibit D)*

*Art. 55: To see if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 16 (1) "Permits, Administration and Enforcement" of the Portage Lake Land Use Ordinance. (See Exhibit A)*

*Art. 56: To See if the Town will vote to approve changes to Section 15 (E) (5) "Permits, Administration and Enforcement" of the Portage Lake Shore Land Zoning Ordinance. (See Exhibit E)*

Sue Rogers: All those in favor of blocking these articles...

Corrine Routhier: Approving.

Brian Cote: We are already blocked. It's approving the block.

Sue Rogers: To approve the block. Thank you.

Roland Caron: We didn't have a chance to discuss the Articles. She read them, but we should still have the opportunity to discuss. I sat on the Planning Board, I sat on the Board of Appeals. These people do that work, it is some of the toughest work that goes on in this Town and they don't get paid for it. We owe it to them to do things right so when they have to make decisions they have something to stand behind. I think to be fair to them, we need to make sure everyone is comfortable with what we are voting on.

Sue Rogers: Yes. That was my fault. (To Selectboard members) I skipped the discussion and then we voted, and so it was approved.

Dave Pierce: We did have hearings on those.

Anita Theriault: Brian, why did you block it?

Brian Cote: To save time, but it looks like it backfired. What they are is just ordinances...All of these have been discussed through Planning Board and public hearings, and all I was trying to do is instead of voting on them individually as each article was to block them together. We have already discussed all of these issues...just vote them in as one.

Gloria Curtis: I have a question. Now that these are blocked, how is that going to compare to next year. Is it still going to be individual? Or is that going to be just one big Article?

Barb Pitcairn: Neither.

Dave Pierce: These are just for ordinances. If it passes it will be adopted.

Melissa Boutot: As a property owner with a fence, are you grandfathered in and that point if your fence is already there?

Linda Caron: On the "buffers and screening", there is no Exhibit C. On "automobile graveyards", there is no Exhibit D. If you look at them, you might consider "animal sounds" as exhibit B with letter B, if you look at the A for "Land use permits", you might consider Exhibit A as letter A, and likewise for letter E, but there is no attached piece of paper...

Barb Pitcairn: It's on the back page.

Linda Caron: That's what I'm referring to. Let's go back and start over.

Corrine Routhier: Linda, it was a communication error on our part. The people who wrote the ordinances and... This paper wasn't made up when the ordinance articles were done, and in order to have them all on one page we kind of squished all of them on one page. So the exhibits don't match where they are. It was a clerical error.

Linda Caron: Therefore, it is a clerical error. I'm sorry. However, in my discussion I would recommend as we continue this process that we cannot talk about "Buffers and Screenings" with no proper Exhibit C. And "automobile graveyards" with no proper Exhibit D.

Unidentified: I see your point.

Linda Caron: But is that *right*?

Barb Pitcairn: I do believe so, because we are referring to an Exhibit you are not being able to read what the terminology is in that ordinance and how it is being changed.

Linda Caron: Or prior to this meeting.

Dave Pierce: Except for the hearing, everyone had a copy of them at the hearing.

Linda Caron: Yes, I know that. There is something missing, it is not here in the book as it should be. I'm just saying, where do we sit?

Roland Caron: It is called due process, and it should have gone out there; people should have had this beforehand. Otherwise than that we would not even need to vote on it if it was just up to the public hearings that we had and how people felt at those public hearings.

Barb Pitcairn: Well, but we do have a change in the ordinance, and we have changed ordinances before in the past. We do have public hearings, and we do have to bring it to the Town for a Town vote. That's just the way it is.

Linda Caron: I'm OK on it all before except how we sit here this evening without the proper documentation; when we walked in and how it was put out to the public prior to this meeting. I don't know how it was done.

Dave Pierce: There was stuff that was missing, that was omitted and should have been there, so what do we want for a solution?

Linda Caron: Than we should not be voting on it. I don't think it is fair to the public; the public here or the public out there.

Anita Theriault: Is it legal?

Barb Pitcairn: It is because we had two public hearings that were posted. It was posted.

Dave Pierce: People had a chance before tonight...

Linda Caron: I know that. But now it is part of your Articles.

Barb Pitcairn: This was proposed right after the holidays.

Roland Caron: I think that as a taxpayer over the years, what has upset me the most is we make an important decision and we end up in court. We end up throwing money down the drain on attorneys. Whereas, if we had done things right on the front-end, we wouldn't be wasting taxpayers' money.

So if we don't know whether this is legal or not legal, let's not act on it until we find out what the proper...

Dave Pierce: We had hearings on it. Due process was followed except for there is something missing out of this book (indicating the 2012 Town Report).

Roland Caron: If due process was followed, we still needed to vote on it as a community. So the community still needed to know if these were to be considered this evening.

Dave Pierce: They were.

Roland Caron: They were to the extent that when you get the book and you look at the exhibit, you couldn't find it. Granted, it may be a clerical error. I'm not saying anybody intended to do this. I'm just saying let's don't find ourselves throwing taxpayer money away to try to justify what you did was right in the first place.

Gloria Curtis: They more or less rectified it by passing these out tonight. We know that they had their hearings and everything, it's just not written in the Article...I mean it's written in the Article, you just didn't see these.

Roland Caron: And those not here, we don't know if that would have made a difference as to whether they would come to the meeting...

Gloria Curtis: No, because everyone has had their chance.

Dave Farnum: Is there anything in actuality that says Exhibit C or D? This page doesn't. But my point is, the only thing missing, I think, is that the page that is stapled in, it has the contents of the changes to the ordinance, it just doesn't say "exhibit B". And his doesn't say "exhibit B" either.

Dave Pierce: It's not labeled correctly.

Dave Farnum: It isn't labeled correctly, but the information is all there.

Kathy Gagnon: I thought Maggie [Pierce] had told me that these are just being brought up to state standards that have to be done. It is not something that Planning Board is doing themselves.

Dave Pierce: No. These were all brought forward by the Planning Board. Maggie had nothing to do with it other than being the Secretary on that.

Kathy Gagnon: All I'm saying is, I thought that she told me that they are State mandated changes that we needed to make.

Dave Pierce: The dog one is, because we were lower than the State minimum. The other ones were Planning Board.

Corrine Routhier: So vote it down, then ask for a special town meeting just on these ordinances.

Barb Pitcairn: We did add "buffers and screenings" because of problems we have had, and then fences in the Shore-land zoning subject to Planning Board approval—there has never been anything in the Shore-land Zoning on what to do about a fence. So we have established something here.

Larry Duchette: These were brought to us by people in the community.

Sue Rogers: Any other discussion about passing or defeating these Articles?

Dave Farnum: You already passed them, so I don't think you can go back and vote on them.

Sue Rogers: Yeah.

Dave Farnum: It's a done deal. The discussion was inadvertently brought about afterward. We have voted on this already.

Barb Pitcairn: But for the sake of the fact that we didn't have a discussion, we should retract the vote. We need to do it right.

Kathy Gagnon: If the vote doesn't change, there will be no problem...

Corrine Routhier: I didn't record what the actual vote was, because it was so fast to be honest with you.

Dave Pierce: Let's just vote on it again.

Dave Farnum: That isn't the point. The point is what did you vote in the first place?

Barb Pitcairn: Linda makes a very good point. If the majority of the public here feels that there is not enough information, they are going to vote down these Articles, these ordinances, down. Then we will go further and we will have to have another special town meeting.

Roland Caron: What complicates the situation is, my friend Brian Cote and his attempt to try to expedite this...(laughter from audience). Some of these people would have had no problem with them at all if we had gone on with them separately, you would have sort of sifted out where the real problems are. Now you are voting on a block, so we don't really know where the issues are. Maybe everyone shares an issue, or people don't.

Clayton DeMerchant: I attended every one of them meetings, and I know they were discussed. It's not my fault that you weren't there to hear those discussions.

Linda Caron: I was.

Clayton DeMerchant: You were there? By God, I don't remember seeing you, but if you were there, I'm sorry. Most of us...I can look around here and see quite a few in here that wasn't even there to that discussion.

Barb Pitcairn: I guess we should vote, and if it is voted down, then we will take it from there. We will have to present it to the public again.

Dave Pierce: If it is voted down.

Barb Pitcairn: I think that is the best way to do it.

Yes: 14

No: 5

**Motion to adopt the group of ordinances carries.**

ART. 57 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$78.20 based on 20 cents per capital, for the Aroostook County Action Program.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: Why did neither the Selectboard nor Budget have input on this?

Christy Dicker: We felt that we wanted to leave it up to the Townspeople if you wanted to spend your money on these different Articles for assistance.

Judy Moreau: And the Budget Committee felt the same.

Linda Caron: We are only talking about 57 right now, but I want you to think about we are spending \$78 for ACAP, who helps an enormous amount of people for food, heat and other health related needs in our community. I *can* tell you that you are spending \$743 on cats and dogs.

Sue Rogers: It is their formal letter and what they request.

Christy Dicker: They send a letter.

Linda Caron: The Town?

Barb Pitcairn: ACAP sends us a letter and that is what they have requested.

Linda Caron: Do we not have a heart for the people that we represent, and say that just because they ask for \$78, and the people need more than that, and that is all we are going to give them?

Gloria Curtis: We are not in a position to say how much they need or not need. This is what they feel they need from our Town per capita. They asked for that amount, so if they wanted \$500, they would ask for it. They base it on a survey of how much they need for our area.

Barb Pitcairn: The way we look at it is they require so much from municipalities and then they get a big percentage from the federal government. But they have to seek contributions from the municipalities in which they are serving. So this might be only 10%, but they get the greater 90% from the federal government. So that's why it looks so little, I mean it IS so little, but the money is coming from the federal government to help these people.

Linda Caron: Just to clarify, you said you didn't put an amount there because you wanted the community...

Christy Dicker: No. We didn't make a recommendation to pass it or not to pass it. We wanted to leave it up to the Town but the amounts are specifically requested by these different organizations. They come as a letter to the Town.

Linda Caron: And you can't rise above it.

Barb Pitcairn: We can. The purpose of it I don't see.

Judy Moreau: No. You can't raise the amount tonight.

Sue Rogers: No, we are not talking about that. We are talking about they could have put a higher amount in the Article.

Linda Caron: And that is what it was last year, because I checked the expended. It's just when I go to church and they tell me that they need money for heat, I give what I can give. And I really hope the Selectboard rethinks these numbers. Because when I went through, they are all the same numbers as last year. And I love my dog and all cats on TV, but I struggle with what we are doing here.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 58 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$100 for the Northern Maine Veterans Cemetery.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**



Discussion:

Brian Cote: I don't know if I should try this again with all the bru-ha-ha...I'd like to make a motion that we block Articles 58....

General Audience Members: No!

**Motion carries.**

ART. 59 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$500 for Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to support its conservation and education efforts in Aroostook County.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 60 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$295 for Aroostook Agency on Aging to assist with match requirements for state and federal grants and contracts.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 61 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$44 to St. John Aroostook RC&D for annual dues.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 62 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$150 for the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Red Cross.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 63 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$587 for the Homeless Services of Aroostook, Inc.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Anita Theriault: This is what they specifically asked for?

Larry Duchette: Yes.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 64 To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate \$743 for the Central Aroostook Humane Society.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Marcelle Gagnon: I agree with Linda. I think that is a lot for the Humane Society compared with what you give to Martha & Mary's Food Kitchen.

Gloria Curtis: Is it what they asked for.

Dave Pierce: There is more to it on this one than that. It is a per capita...

Larry Duchette: Each community gets a request based on per capita.

Dave Pierce: Per population of the town is what they based that number on, it's not a number we came up with. It is per capita. That's where that comes from.

Anita Theriault: What happens if we turn it down? Are we going to lose services.

Gloria Curtis: Don't expect to take your animals to the shelter, or any stray you find.

Kathy Gagnon: A town has to belong to somewhere, and this is where we belong and this is the figure they send us.

Marcelle Gagnon: So we have no say in this.

Kathy Gagnon: You can vote it down.

Hollie Umphrey: Our animal control officer, Joe, had a case last year where a home was vacated and there were numerous animals in there. We get a letter from the humane society on how many cases that were brought in

from the Town of Portage. That cares for the vet costs, food, etc. It is how many we bring in. So when there are strays or what have you, it is what we have used. So that is your portion.

Alyce Bryant-Reece: That is your portion, but if you have to take an animal there yourself you still have to pay. So you are getting slammed twice?

Gloria Curtis: That's their choice to charge you. If you bring in a stray, I've brought in a stray before and not come to the Town and ask them to do it, and I didn't pay anything. If I brought my own animal in that I can't pay for anymore, they would charge me to leave an animal there.

Kathy Gagnon: And they don't have enough money in a given year anyway. They are always asking for donations.

Gary Hafford: Personally, I think it is a good idea.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 65 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$100 for VFW Memorial Day.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Linda Caron: Do you think that is a good idea? That is all I have to say.

**Motion carries.**

ART. 66 To see if the Town will vote to rise and \$100 for Catholic Charities.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 67 To see if the Town will vote to rise and \$100 for Martha and Mary's Food Kitchen.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion: None. **Motion carries.**

ART. 68 To see if the Town will vote to rise and \$100 for Maine Public Broadcasting.

**Motion made in the positive, seconded.**

Discussion:

Roland Caron: Just a note, in the future, you have just amended all of those articles with no votes because they were missing words.

**Motion carries.**

Dave Pierce thanks Christy Dicker for her service to the Town.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corrine Routhier